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ART AND PROGRESS

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THE CITY ART MUSEUM. ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM

BY CLARENCE STRATTON

WHEN the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis in 1904, denuded the wildest and most wooded portion of Forest Park, people wondered whether anything could compensate for the transformation of natural beauty into stucco exhibition halls.

Seven years have now elapsed; the bare brown spaces are turning green, the rapidly growing saplings are becoming trees, the curving lagoons are acknowledged to be more picturesque than the sluggish River des Peres; but best of all there remains from the Exposition the Art Museum on the summit of Art Hill, wherein is displayed the excellent city art collection.

Standing on the crest of Art Hill one looks down the slope of green to the

basin and lagoons, then beyond to the red, green and grey buildings of the city. Here on the heights, mounted on a handsome steed, with sword raised, is the imposing figure of the Crusading King after whom the city is named—a noble piece of sculpture, the work of Charles Niehaus, which, like the art building itself, is a souvenir of the vanished exposition.

The Museum is not one great gallery. There are spacious rooms for the display of large canvases, but there are also many small rooms, and a few corridors in which delicate water colors and etchings can be effectively displayed. It is true that the central beautiful hall of sculpture is badly arranged and overcrowded, but it will be easy to discard



THE SCULPTURE HALL

CITY ART MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS

some casts and transfer to other places in the city statues of merely local, not artistic, interest. This same principle of selection must sooner or later be followed with the canvases. But the gallery has even now the nucleus of a splendid collection, which will be increased rapidly, and, it is to be hoped, judiciously, during the coming years. By a recent decision in regard to the tax laws, an income of about \$100,000 a year will be turned over to the Art Museum by the city.

It would be impossible to even list the pictures that impress one, but certain subjects strike one's eye directly and remain vivid in one's memory. There is a "Portrait of a Child," by Franz Lenbach; a head in white and brown, simple and suggestive, but displaying in its verve the touch of genius. There is a painting by Zorn, "Head of a Woman," which is an unusual composition, strong

and effective. "The Miser," by V. E. Makowski, is almost brutal in its aspect, but strong, and one turns from it to the "Lady Betty," of Irving R. Wiles, with pleasure. Here is aristocracy, high breeding, not only in the long lines of the figure in the ermine stole and satin gown, but in the poise of the head under the black plumed hat, in the shape of the left forearm resting on a chair, and in the right arm under the yellow and scarlet scarf. The face, to change Dickens a little, is provoking, very provoking, but eminently satisfying, as well.

I have heard of "artistic problems," such as painting a white calf in strong sunlight against a white-washed wall, and I can believe the result would be at least distinctive, but I cannot any more understand why some artists choose certain subjects than I can comprehend why DeBussy should attempt to put the smells of a night in Spain into music.

This is brought to mind by "The Courtyard of an Orphan Asylum in Holland," by Wm. M. Chase—as hard and dull and unpoetic a canvas as I ever saw.

Genuine humor in good pictures is rare in America; foreigners attempt the unusual with more success than we. One

rested by "The Young Astronomer," by A. Kedzierski. With knees tucked up under him, a peasant boy with pug nose sits gazing intently upwards at a slip of a crescent moon and a few pale stars. The night is not warm, yet these distant beams mean more to him than the steady



THE HARVESTERS

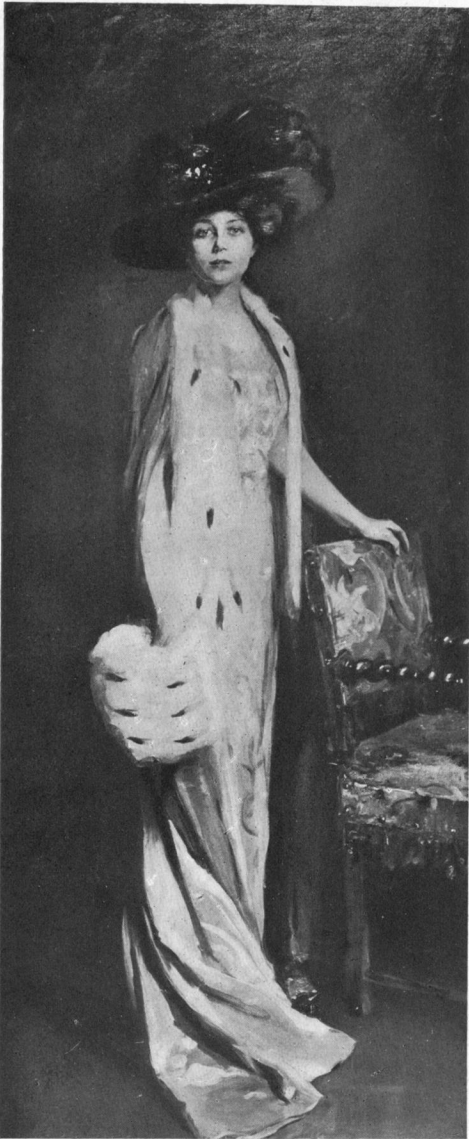
L. L'HERMITTE

will not be surprised then to learn that "The Apple of Discord," over which three urchins are struggling, is by a Bavarian, Karl Hartmann. The entire canvas is a grey-green, for no sunlight penetrates the closely woven boughs of the fruit trees under which the conflict is taking place.

From humor to quaintness is merely a step, so one's attention is next ar-

rested by "The Young Astronomer," by A. Kedzierski. Though the idea is quaint, there is a beautiful atmosphere of solitude and mystery about this evenly toned painting.

After the quaint the homely. Of this sentiment there are many examples, most of them Breton or Dutch. Edward E. Simmons has produced in "Tired Out" the most attractive. A mother who has



LADY BETTY

IRVING R. WILES

been peeling potatoes has fallen asleep, arm and head drooping upon the bed where a chubby baby sits upright. He wants to stretch out his hand to touch the supporting arm, yet he is deterred by the very strangeness, and startled into a silent expectancy. There is a deal of homely sentiment here.

To this nothing could be a sharper contrast than the weirdness of "The

Wolf Charmer," by John LaFarge. It is all purple and green—all wolfish. The bagpipe player, surrounded by the snarling, crowding beasts he is leading down the bare, rocky defile, is as wolfish as they in movement and face.

The pictures that attracted the attention of foreigners at the exhibition in Rome last year were those depicting our city streets and buildings. There is a beauty in the gorge of Broadway no less than in that of the Grand Canyon. A few have put it into color. Usually the sharp corners and strong colors are softened by nature's haze and mist; so Paul Cornoyer paints "The Plaza after the Rain," and Birge Harrison, who has made New York almost his own on canvas, interprets "The Flatiron after Rain." The former interprets the square and buildings as enveloped in misty atmosphere so that everything seems reduced to a single tone, yet there are suggestions of color—purple in the low pile of buildings in the middle distance, yellow in a street car, in a child's coat and on a bronze statue to the right, green in an omnibus to the left. In the latter picture there is a great sweep of rain-splashed asphalt, and a broad purple band leads the eye up the picture to the orange-lighted windows of the great shaft which lifts its height into the air. Over all settles the soft mellowing grey of the fog. If Whistler taught painters to see such things he may be pardoned much. In both these compositions the main lines are vertical; in "The End of Autumn," by Louis Loir, the lines are all horizontal. The view is taken from the end of the Pont d'Austerlitz. The Kiosk, the bridge, the distant dome of the Pantheon, all familiar Paris details, stand out clear and sharp against grey streets, grey walls, grey sky. Those who love the ocean will turn to "Twilight," by Alexander Harrison, and stand in imagination where sand and water meet, looking across the rollers to the calm sea. A twinkling path of yellow light leads the eye across the swinging water to the newly risen full moon.

From the gorgeous splurges of color by E. Carpenter representing foreign



INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

JULIAN STORY

types one turns to two low-toned, restful canvases by E. H. Wuerpel, and to a quiet mountain picture by E. J. Steichen.

In one room are eighteen views of Greece, painted by Gifford Dyer, which are perhaps more architectural and archeological than artistic. They are clear cut, like illustrations, but need the charm that Jules Guerin knows so well how to throw over a quiet ancient landscape.

The latest acquisition to the Museum is a large canvas by L'hermitte purchased from the Charles Parsons fund of the Washington University for \$11,000, a picture of mowers in a wheat field. Red-roofed farm houses mark the distance. In the immediate foreground are two women and two men. One of the women kneels to bind a sheaf while above her stands one of the mowers, a son of the soil, with furrowed face.

Those who know only Sorolla's later work would not recognize as his "An-

other Marguerite," which is included in this collection. It was painted in 1892. and is somber in coloring and solemn in significance. Fortunately, we may turn from this to more recent productions, gayer in spirit as well as in color. Even the shaded "Garden of the Adarves," though it is entirely in green, brown and yellow, shows that the radiant sun is outside. In "Under the Awning" and "Before the Bath" the sun is everywhere. Both are of the seaside. In the first, three girls in white are seen against a background of cream-colored sand, white sea foam, and deep blue water. One girl wears on her hat a lavender ribbon and green veil, but these touches, and the lavender spots in another's dress, merely accentuate the yellow of the blinding sunlight. In the second, the artist has painted a little nude girl, seated against a white wall. Again the sunlight is omnipresent and its insistent yellow gives the keynote to the color scheme. Like many another "realist," I did not believe



TWILIGHT

ALEXANDER HARRISON

there was any such golden sunlight. But now I know there is, for last July I coasted along Southern Spain, and saw the real Sorolla colors.

Art critics and theorists may discuss at length the question of whether or not an artist should perpetuate a moment of intense suffering, but it must be confessed that the canvas, which attracts the most attention in this Museum, is a painting by Julian Story illustrating an incident of the French Revolution related in Lamartine's "History of the Girondists." Monsieur Sombreuil will be granted his life by the howling Paris

mob if his daughter, who has plead for him, drinks the blood of murdered aristocrats. As a negro prepares to toss the corpses into a cart, and the grinning *sans-culottes* shake their fists and show their teeth, the beautiful young woman stretches forth her hand for the bitter cup.

From all these pictures with their variety of color and theme one passes again into the hall of statuary, with its fine plaster groups, and from there, outside where the good St. Louis is always keeping faithful watch over the busy city.

HOUSING REFORM*

BY EDWARD T. HARTMAN

SECRETARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CIVIC LEAGUE

"HOUSING reform," as used in this paper, should develop some relationship with the artistic. It is possible in theory and practice to so develop it, although that form of development is as yet a too academic accomplishment.

The sanest interpretation of the meaning of "housing reform" would seem to point to the development of homes which are easy of access, light, dry, well ven-

tilated, cheerful. The need for this reform is easily seen when we consider the unplanned areas covered by high, crowded, dark, damp, filthy, depressing places which so many of our fellow citizens through preference or force of circumstances call "home." The essence of a successful life must be to give and receive day by day the best that the healthy nature craves, that the ability of

* A paper read at the annual meeting of the American Federation of Arts, Washington, D. C., May 9, 10, 11, 1912.